

John R. Justice Program

Performance Update of SAA¹ Activity through September 30, 2015²

The John R. Justice (JRJ) loan repayment program was established by the Attorney General through the Department of Justice to provide financial assistance to those who accept positions as public attorneys. Its purpose is to encourage qualified attorneys to apply for and maintain employment as state, local, and Federal public defenders and prosecutors. This offers an incentive for law school graduates dealing with student loans to consider these positions.

Since the JRJ program debuted in 2010, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 U.S. territories have received JRJ grants. The amounts vary widely from state to state, as the formula used to calculate awards is partially dependent on the state/grantee's population.

Summary Findings

- In fiscal year (FY) 2015, 59 percent of funded beneficiaries were prosecutors, 40 percent were state/local defenders, and 1 percent were federal defenders.
- The total dollar amount of funds distributed in FY 2015 was \$3,421,589.
- When selecting applicants, SAAs are required to give priority to those with the least ability to repay their loans. Seventy percent of applicants were awarded funds in FY 2015.

Total Grant Amounts

Data from this report represents 82 federal awards (awarded in federal fiscal years 2011–2014) and \$3.4 million. The average state award was \$42,167, ranging from \$10,033 to \$167,502.

Table 1. Active Federal Awards in FY 2015 by Award Year

| Fiscal Year | Active ³ Awards | JRJ Award Totals |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 2011 | 2 | \$ 296,108 |
| 2012 | 3 | \$ 187,253 |
| 2013 | 23 | \$1,233,122 |
| 2014 | 54 | \$1,741,236 |
| Total | 82 | \$3,457,719 |

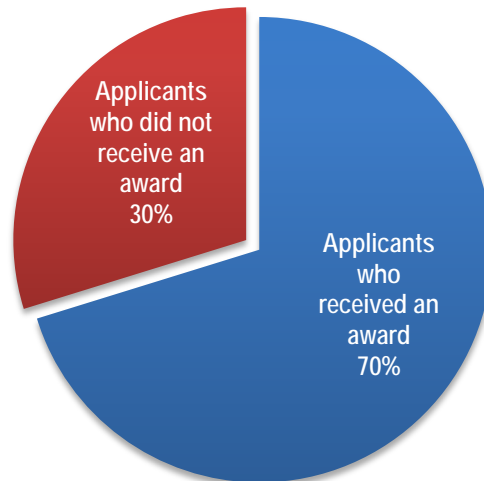
¹ SAA: State Administering Agency

² The following data come from Performance Measurement Tool (PMT) data covering JRJ grant activities for FY 2011–2015. Values are calculated from all available reporting periods containing FY 2015 data (October 2014–September 2015). As with any PMT report, accurate data presented relies on accurate data entry by grantees. The data in this fact sheet accurately reflect the information as entered by grantees.

³ Active awards are those in which grantees actively conducted activities outlined in their grant applications. Some awards were closed prior to this report and are thus no longer active.

Applicants and Beneficiaries

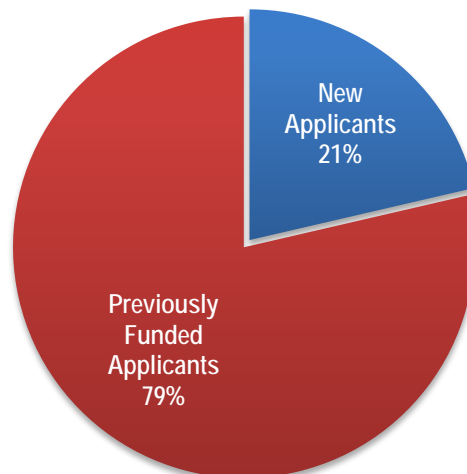
Figure 1. FY 2015 Applicants Who Did and Did Not Receive Awards



A strong program rests on its ability to attract strong beneficiaries. By having a high number of eligible applicants, the JRJ grant program can award grant funds to the most deserving applicants (those with the least ability to repay their loans). As Figure 1 shows, for FY 2015, the JRJ grant was able to fund 70 percent of its applicants.

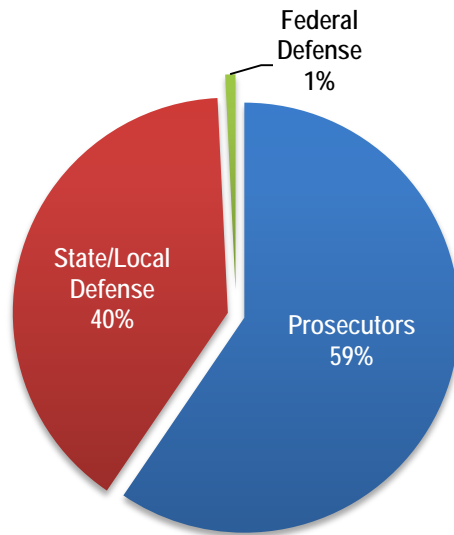
State and federal public defenders and state prosecutors who agree to remain employed as public attorneys for at least 3 years are eligible to apply for the JRJ grant program. Attorneys can be previous beneficiaries of JRJ grant funds or new applicants, and priority is given to beneficiaries who were funded in the last fiscal year and had not met the 3-year minimum service requirement. In FY 2015, most of the applicants (79 percent) were previously funded prosecutors (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Total Previously Funded and New Applicants



Almost 60 percent of the applicants for JRJ funds were prosecutors in FY 2015. This includes all previously funded beneficiaries as well as all new applicants (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Applicants Receiving Awards by Position



Allocations

Per the grant solicitation, SAAs must ensure that they allocate an equal amount of grant funds to both prosecutors and public defenders. Table 2 displays the dollar amount distributed⁴ to program participants in FY 2015 by reporting period. On average, prosecutors received \$2,077 each, state/local defenders received \$2,747, and federal defenders received \$1,071.

Table 2. Funds Distributed to Participants by Reporting Period in FY 2015

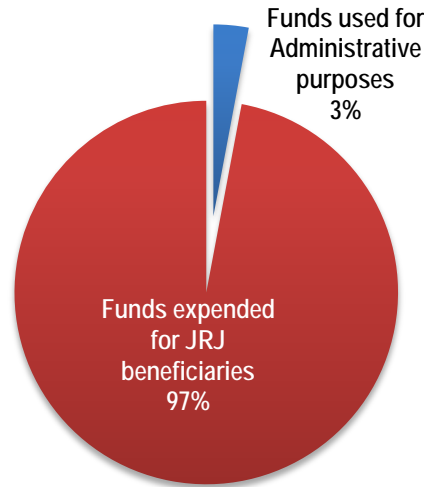
| Reporting Period | Prosecutors | | State/Local Public Defenders | | Federal Defenders | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Funds Distributed | Number of Recipients | Funds Distributed | Number of Recipients | Funds Distributed | Number of Recipients |
| Oct.– Dec. 2014 (N = 83) | \$ 129,072 | 98 | \$ 115,566 | 55 | \$ 883 | 1 |
| Jan.–March 2015 (N = 76) | \$ 636,057 | 134 | \$ 599,325 | 106 | \$ 2,780 | 3 |
| April–June 2015 (N = 69) | \$ 622,901 | 234 | \$ 561,049 | 162 | \$11,803 | 10 |
| July–Sept. 2015 (N = 57) | \$ 369,656 | 380 | \$ 369,758 | 276 | \$ 2,739 | 3 |
| TOTAL | \$1,757,686 | 846 | \$1,645,698⁵ | 599 | \$18,205 | 17 |

⁴ The amount distributed is different than the amount awarded during FY 2015.

⁵ States may apply for a waiver that outlines their efforts to comply with JRJ's equal distribution requirement. If the waiver is granted, the equal allocation requirement is suspended. Maine and South Dakota have been approved for waivers, which impact FY 2015 reports.

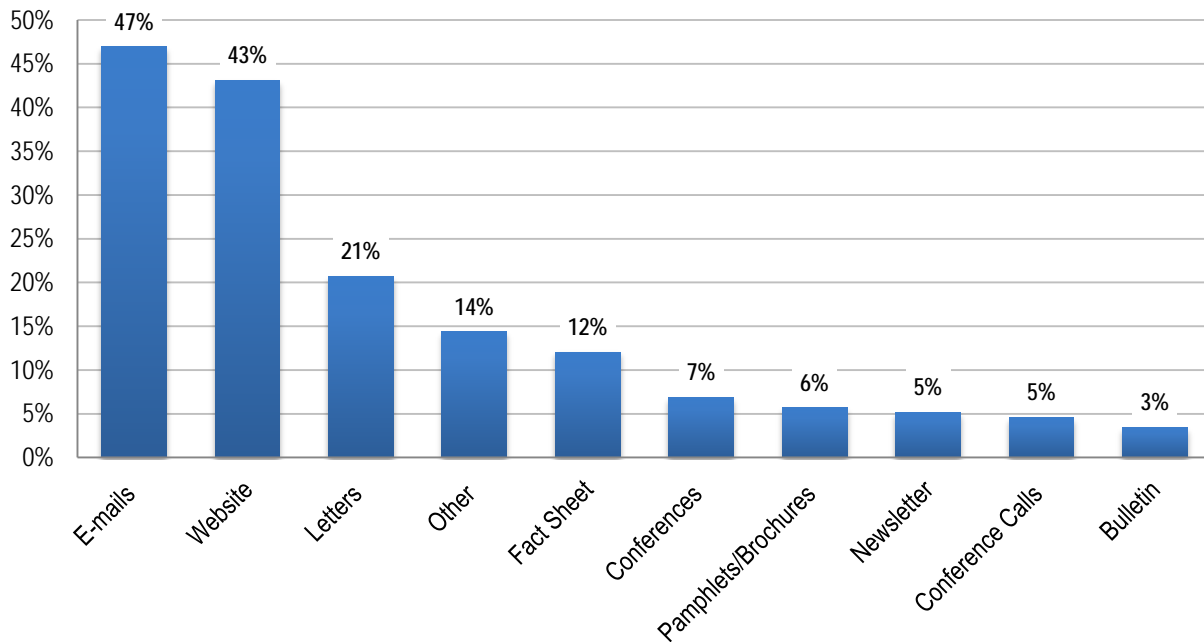
Program Administration

Figure 4. Administrative Costs Compared with Beneficiary Disbursements



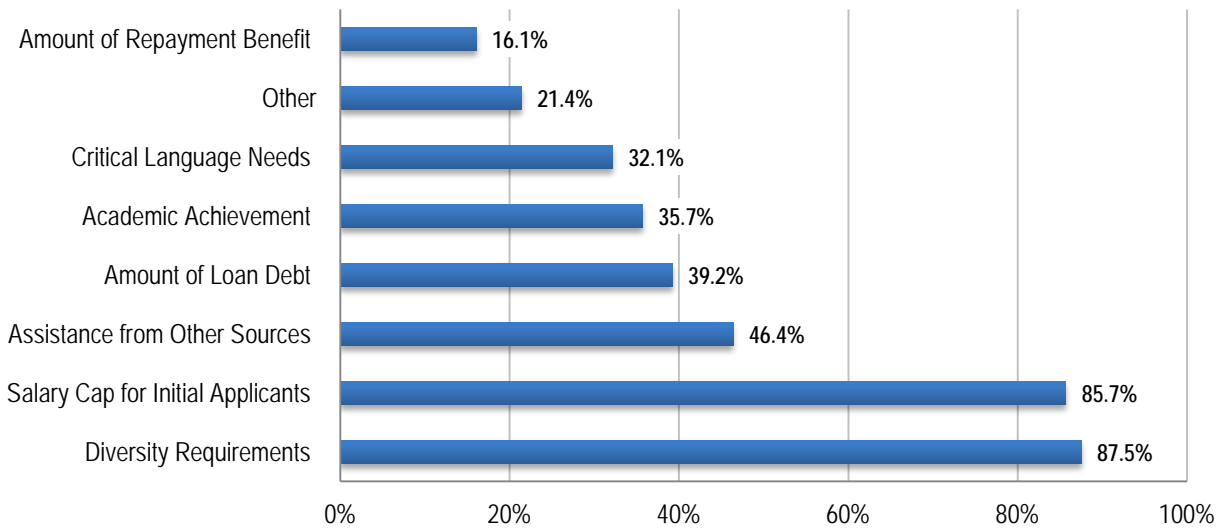
Each SAA is allowed to allocate up to 10 percent of its grant funds toward the program’s administrative costs. During FY 2015, 3 percent (\$102,285.59) was spent on administrative.

Figure 5. Percent of State Administering Agencies Conducting Outreach by Type



SAAs must educate the public about the program to recruit potential beneficiaries (public defenders/prosecutors). The most common types of outreach grantees used were e-mail (47 percent of grantees) and program web sites (43 percent of grantees).

Figure 6. Factors Used to Identify JRJ Beneficiaries



The vast majority of law students attain loans to finance their legal education. When selecting beneficiaries, grantees are required to give priority to applicants determined to have the least ability to repay their loans; therefore, applicants with higher debt-to-income ratios are given priority for funding. Other factors SAAs use to identify eligible beneficiaries include diversity requirements, salary cap for initial applicants, and whether the applicant receives assistance from other sources. Salary cap for initial applicants and diversity requirements were the factors that identified the highest number of beneficiaries, with 85.7 percent and 87.5 percent, respectively.